

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 02490 010936Z

11
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /030 W
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R 010800Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 931
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRAGUE 2490

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR PINT CZ
SUBJECT: YURI ANDROPOV VISITS PRAGUE

1. RUDE PRAVO ANNOUNCED AUGUST 30 THAT KGB CHIEF YURI ANDROPOV HAD VISITED PRAGUE ON THE INVITATION OF CZECHOSLOVAK INTERIOR MINISTER JAROMIR OBZINA. ANDROPOV AND HIS DELEGATION WERE SAID TO HAVE EXCHANGED EXPERIENCES WITH CZECHOSLOVAK COLLEAGUES AND TO HAVE SIGNED A DOCUMENT, SUBJECT OF WHICH NOT DISCLOSED.
 2. AUGUST 31 RUDE PRAVO FRONT-PAGED PHOTOGRAPH OF ANDROPOV MEETING WITH PRESIDENT HUSAK AT PRAGUE CASTLE. ACCOMPANYING TEXT NOTED THAT PARTY SECRETARY VASIL BILAK AS WELL AS INTERIOR MINISTER OBZINA SAW ANDROPOV OFF AT RUZYNE AIRPORT ON MONDAY, AUGUST 30.
 3. ONE EMBASSY OFFICER ENCOUNTERED A LARGE AND HEAVILY-GUARDED MOTORCADE--POSSIBLY ANDROPOV'S--COMPOSED OF RUSSIAN AND CZECHOSLOVAK LIMOUSINES ROARING THROUGH DOWNTOWN PRAGUE ON AUGUST
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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 02490 010936Z

28. OUTRIDERS CARRIED SUB-MACHINE GUNS. GOVERNMENT GUEST

HOUSE NEAR PRAGUE CASTLE WAS UNDER HEAVY GUARD SATURDAY EVENING.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT WE CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS

VISIT. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE THAT IT WAS MORE THAN A ROUTINE CONSULTATION, IN VIEW OF THE APPARENTLY LARGE DELEGATION ACCOMPANYING KGB CHIEF, NUMBER OF CZECHOSLOVAK INTERIOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL APPARENTLY INVOLVED, FACT THAT A "CONCLUDING DOCUMENT" WAS ADOPTED, AND THE PROMINENCE WHICH MEDIA GAVE TO VISIT AS A WHOLE. THAT VASIL BILAK ACCOMPANIED ANDROPOV TO AIRPORT REFLECTS HIS ROLE AS KEY PARTY SECRETARY CHARGED WITH MAINTAINING TIGHT IDEOLOGICAL CONTROL AND ENSURING THAT POLICIES AND EVENTS DEVELOP ALONG LINES ACCEPTABLE TO MOSCOW. TIMING OF THE VISIT, WITHIN FEW DAYS OF THE 8TH ANNIVERSARY OF 1968 INVASION, IS ALSO A REMINDER OF MOSCOW'S CONTINUED CONCERN OVER PROGRESS OF "NORMALIZATION" IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
BYRNE

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